and £30 per annum. It is profitable to carry fresh fish inland by bicycle even as far as Blantyre,[1] as the shore price to the retailer is 4*s.* a load, which later may fetch from 16*s.* to 24*s.*[2] Yao on the south-west lake shore grow an excellent quality rice.[3] Rice is also grown near Lake Chilwa, but is mainly sold in the market organized near the lake shore by the Agricultural Department.

Division of Labour

The man builds the house, hunts, fishes, makes the nets, baskets, grain-store, game-traps, and, in the old days, the bark-cloth. He cultivates the tobacco. He cuts down the trees and may help with the hoeing and harvesting. The woman hoes, muds the floor of the hut, sweeps, cooks, brings firewood, draws water, brews beer, makes the pots and pipes.[4]

Land Usage

There are two types of garden in the Yao areas south of Lake Nyasa: one the ordinary garden in which the staples grow, and second, gardens along the stream beds. These latter are especially valuable for providing out-of-season crops. In addition most householders have a few small plots for tobacco and ground-nuts.

The main garden is cultivated by the slash-and-burn method, common in Central Africa. The Yao, unlike the Bemba, garden occupies the whole area cleared. Burning is done just before the rainy season (October–November). The ash and soil are hoed into elongated mounds and grain is planted along the ridges. Gardens may be cultivated for more than five years. In the second and subsequent years of cultivation the stalks and weeds are piled up and burnt. There are signs of soil impoverishment. The gardens are cleared in August, and heaped to dry for burning. After the burning the seeds are planted in late November. By February and March green maize is available to supplement the diet, and by the end of April the crops are ready to be harvested. The maize is stored in wicker containers, while sorghum is stored in the huts on a stand. Cassava is planted in large mounds made by turning the turfs over, so that the roots are outside the mound and the vegetable matter inside. Legumes are planted in smaller gardens, or interplanted with the main crop. Ground-nuts are stored, after being shelled, in mud-plastered wicker containers, designed to be rat-proof. Tobacco is planted at the sides of the streams for hand-watering in the seedling stage, and then transplanted about January. The leaves are ready to be plucked about April and soon afterwards they are marketed. Sweet potatoes are planted in the rainy season, and are ready for eating in May. The stream gardens yield out-of-season crops—maize, beans, pumpkins, and also sugar-cane, which is used in the initiation ceremonies.

Craftsmanship

The Yao have few skills. All cultivation is by hoe; axes and knives are their only other technological equipment. The men make mats from reeds and palm leaf, and the women make pottery. The huts are strongly built from poles laced with bamboo and plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with grass. Under Arab influence the

[1] *Census of Native Population*, 1931, p. 26.
[2] Codrington, 1898, p. 517.
[3] Aplin, 1931, p. 19.
[4] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 236; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 137.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

Yao make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

District	*Adult males fit to work*	*Percentage of emigrants*	*Number producing economic crops*	*Number of subsistence producers*	*Emigrants not heard of since 1930*
South Nyasa .	24,230	27·1	2,912 (12%)	12,025 (49%)	873
Upper Shire .	24,673	15·9	2,555 (10%)	16,629 (67%)	253
Blantyre . .	25,330	15·6	3,788 (15%)	10,165 (40%)	986
Zomba . .	26,679	12·4	7,720 (29%)	9,040 (33%)	553

South Nyasa district, which is unfertile waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[4]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE[5]

Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[6] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[7]

Clan names, *lukoryo*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[8] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Werner, 1906, p. 144; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 20–2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bell Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.

[4] Smith, 1937.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 471; Meredith Sanderson, 1920, p. 370. Cf. Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 187, who says that brothers inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189.

[8] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 236.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER III

THE COMPOSITION OF MODERN CHIEFDOMS

Chiefdoms in the Administrative Mould

361 NO less than in MacDonald's time, modern chiefdoms are in the first place organizations of villages. Physically, the villages consist of solid pole and daub huts of varying sizes. [342] Some huts are rectangular, twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide, with glass windows, panelled doors, and thatched roofs. Others are small and round, about eight feet in diameter. There is also a considerable variation in the compactness of villages: often the huts are only a few yards apart, but sometimes at least a hundred yards or more. Most villages, however, could be circumscribed by a circle of a quarter-mile diameter, though, of course, there are many exceptions. There is a slight tendency for the village to spread itself along a path, in a way faintly suggesting ribbon development, but on the whole there is no particular physical pattern to the Yao village. In fact, though most villages have fairly distinct physical boundaries, and are definitely discrete clusters of huts, some are difficult to identify in this way. To the minds of the local people, however, the 621 village is quite clear and distinct. This is because they see the village primarily as a social unit, and tend to impute into physical boundaries more definition than actually exists. It is in the social sense that I use the word here: the 'village' is a spatial group which recognizes its identity against similar groups.

The importance of the village in Yao structure can hardly be over-emphasized. Membership of a village provides the first index whereby people determine a stranger's background. If, after village membership is fixed, no other links can be found with a stranger, such as distant kinship, the relationship will remain at that level. A gossip identifies the person about whom 621 he is speaking by giving his or her name and the name of his 551 or her village. He says, 'Bt.[1] Mwana of Cigwaja village'.

[1] I use this abbreviation for the Arabic 'binti', 'daughter of'. Binti, pronounced 'biti' by the Yao, with Ali and Wadi, 'son of', appear commonly in Yao names.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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PLATE IV

A dispute in settlement at Chiwalo's hut. The assessor is sitting under the veranda behind the pole. A village headman can just be discerned in the shade under the veranda. The commoners sit in the sun.

(*October 1948*)

[facing p.56]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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(*a*) Women of a matrilineage preparing cassava together. A scene in a village in Malemia's area.
(*September 1949*)

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(*b*) A hut in Ali Kasunka village (Bt. Ntuwa's hut, i.e. hut number 3 in the diagram in Appendix B). In the foreground are grainbins.
(*September 1948*)

PLATE VIII

[Facing p. 140]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

578 613 622 adult son, went to Walusa one day and borrowed a chicken. Some days afterwards Walusa asked for payment for the chicken. Ali Cibwana took offence at the way in which Walusa asked for payment and told him so. Walusa remarked that Ali Cibwana was insolent and insisted on the payment for the chicken. Ali Cibwana now said that if his father's brother insisted on asking in this rude way he would not be paid back at all. The tempers of the two men became more and more frayed until at last Walusa threw Ali Cibwana to the ground. When Sanudia, Ali Cibwana's younger brother, saw this he grabbed up a stick and came up to Walusa and asked him why he had thrown his elder brother down. Walusa had hardly time to answer before Sanudia had struck him. At this Walusa's younger brothers joined in the fight. Mpakata now rushed up and started to support his sons against his younger brothers. When Mpakata's sisters and sisters' daughters, who were pounding, heard this, they took up their pounding pestles (poles about five feet long and three inches in diameter) and came running to Mpakata's younger brothers' assistance. When Mpakata saw these women coming with their poles he dashed into his house and emerged with a stick with which he defended himself. The noise and clamour had by this time attracted a number of strangers from a nearby village and they were able to pacify Mpakata's villagers. The matrilineal relatives of Mpakata gathered in one part of the village and Walusa told them they ought to leave. They decided, nevertheless, 'to say goodbye'[1] to Kaumbwe, who was a perpetual elder brother of Mpakata. Kaumbwe called in an unrelated village headman named Idi, and they held a meeting in the village the next day.

The dispute was discussed in the presence of the arbitrator. Walusa said he wished to leave the village with his sisters. Idi, however, told him that he should not do this but that they should take the matter up to Chiwalo's court. On an agreed day Mpakata and his children and matrilineal relatives went to Chiwalo's court where the case was arbitrated on by Capola who lived near to Mpakata. He found Mpakata guilty and ordered him to pay 10*s.* to Walusa. At the same time he told Walusa that he was not to take the female members of the matrilineage away from the village. And there the matter rested.

A village headman in Yao 'binds the village',[2] and when the village is made up of linked groups as well as his matrilineal kin,

[1] Ostensibly to say goodbye but in fact to air their grievances.

[2] *Akutawa musi.* The word *kutawa* may also mean to build. Yao houses are built by binding poles together with ropes and then filling the gaps with mud. [342]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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(*a*) Part of a village in Namwera area. The distinct group of huts on the right is not related to those in the left-hand corner, but is only one section of the village.

(*October 1948*)

(*b*) A slightly different view of the same part of the village. The fence encloses the grainbin, kitchen and latrine.

(*October 1948*)

PLATE IX

[facing p. 206]

CHAPTER VIII

THE VILLAGE THROUGH TIME

IN order to present my analysis of the internal structure of Yao villages and of the position of the village in the social structure as a whole, I have given static pictures of villages at particular moments of time. But it should be clear that this description of the enduring social relationships, which appear as a static social structure, is abstracted from a series of on-going processes in which certain social relationships appear as repetitive elements.

In reality villages are constantly changing. Their personnel is replaced, their internal lineage composition changes, and they change their sites from chiefdom to chiefdom. It is perhaps easiest to visualize these changes, and the way they affect the structure, by viewing them in terms of the slow ontogenetic development of villages. Villages pass through a cycle which leads from their inception, through internal differentiation out of a larger group, to final break-up through their own differentiation, and the resumption of their original simple form.

Let us consider the typical life history of a hamlet which has just moved into a particular area. It is composed of four or five huts belonging to the daughters of one woman. The mother herself may be alive, as an old woman and very probably a widow. The daughters are adults and have with them their husbands and children. The hamlet settles down to its life in its new area. The warden of this sorority-group probably lives some miles away and the women have to send the older children to call him when they need his help. As the daughters of the women grow up, young men come to marry them. Each couple may start to live in the girl's mother's kitchen at the back of the hut. In time the husband builds a hut next door to the hut of his mother-in-law. Yao huts as a rule are made from pole and daub and they last from five to ten years. White ants eat the poles away and the thatch always leaks a little in very wet weather. The winds and the rains erode away the plaster.

539 "*Lakala lakala kasala ka!*"
"Picking up picking up a little basket full!"

to which the listeners exclaim

"*Lakalaa!*"
"Overflows!"

At the completion of each sentence in the story, one of his listeners will exclaim, "Go!" When he has finished his story, he says,

"*Ajisisi lisisi lisisimanga panitse pakuwere, unike chipanji!*"
"Take off the fire, the little mouse lest it be singed, by the head it is very hard, the hair (is) in a lump!"

During the intervals of a long story, one of the listeners may break in and sing some little song, such as the song of the sekendu in the story of the greedy man, thus giving the story-teller a rest.

The house and household utensils. The Yao house does not differ greatly from the
●342 Nyanja habitation which I have already described elsewhere.[1] The accompanying figure (Pl. XIV, fig. 15) gives the circular plan of a hut with a veranda partly open and partly enclosed to form a room. The central pole of the hut is indicated, the hearth (H), the position of the sleeping mats (M), and the place where the water pots are kept (P). The
352 bed may be a bamboo platform supported by forked sticks a foot above the ground (*nsanga-wuli*), or a dais of mud, over which is spread the sleeping-mat, *upese*. (Pl. XIV, fig. 14.) Seats, *chilenga*, are made of logs of wood with conveniently placed branches acting as legs. I have seen a symmetrically carved log with shaped legs all in one piece, which suggested by its form and by the presence of a button on the midline of the under surface that it was made in the imitation of an animal. Plank seats with peg legs are now sometimes seen. Wooden pegs are driven into the wall and serve to hang odd articles upon.

[359] The hearth is simply a shallow depression in the mud floor, around which are placed three large stones to support the cooking pots. Sometimes a canopy is built over the hearth, consisting of four upright poles supporting a platform made of reeds and grass, upon which millet and other seed grains are often stored. From this platform *lipulu* (*tsanje*, Chin.), the gourd containing the supply of salt is often hung. The seed grain tied up in
[251] little bundles is suspended from the *lipulu* where it becomes very dry and smoked, without any ill effect to the next year's crop. (Pl. XIV, fig. 16.) Four pronged branches of trees are often stuck in the ground with a string tied around the prongs, and used as holders for gourds, salt bottles, etc.; this device is called *lipanda* (*pkanda*, Chin.). (Pl. XIV, fig. 10.)
415 The smaller utensils include the porridge stirring stick *mtiko* (Yao and Chin.) (Pl. XIV, fig. 12), several wooden spoons *chilimi* (*chipanda ne nanasiwa*, Chin.), (Pl. XIV, figs. 11, 13), a number of gourds of various shapes and sizes used as ladles and drinking vessels,

[1] 'Notes on some tribes of British Central Africa,' op. cit., p. 230-233.